

**MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING,
21 MAY 2008 AT 10:00am,
ROBERTSON WING MEETING ROOM,
GENERAL REGISTER HOUSE**

Present: George MacKenzie, Peter Anderson, Dave Brownlee, Jim Grady, Frank Manson (Non Executive Director), Michael Moss (Non Executive Director), Maureen McGeown (SG Finance); Louise Wilson (SG HR), Jenny Cutts (secretary).

Apologies: none

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 February 2008 were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 [2.2] George Mackenzie provided an update on the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA). Scottish Ministers have agreed to fund the SCA to a sum of £150,000 per annum for 3 years. It is expected that the SCA will take up NAS' offer of office accommodation and an office on the ground floor east at General Register House has been identified for their use.

2.2 [2.7] At a meeting with the Scottish Catholic Archives, it was agreed that the index to digitised Catholic registers be made exclusively available to ScotlandsPeople customers. Images of the Catholic registers will be available to Historical researchers using the existing finding aids.

2.3 [5.2.1] The future of West Register House (WRH) has not been discussed with Edinburgh Council due to uncertainty over how possible wider SG organisational change may impact upon NAS long term accommodation. A ministerial submission outlining options for the future of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) has a bearing on NAS future accommodation plans. Dialogue with Edinburgh Council about WRH will be established following Ministerial decisions.

2.4 [9] Business continuity planning is still under consideration.

3. HR update

3.1 Louise Wilson provided an update on Scottish Government HR matters. The new resourcing policy was launched in February 2008. Since the launch there has been a 260% increase in the number of vacancies advertised. A number of reasons for the increase have been suggested, but one major reason is likely to be restrictions now placed on managed moves.

3.2 No dates have been set for centralised recruitment boards. It is expected that the first will be an external A band board, followed by A band promotion to B band, then B band to C band. Discussions with unions will inform this timetable.

3.3 A communication on pay policy from Barbara Allison, Head of Human Resources, Scottish Government, has been circulated to senior management for comment. Potential pay negotiations with the unions were discussed. Negotiations have not yet begun and feedback is

sought. A communication to update all staff about the pay negotiations will be issued in due course. It was noted that the unions' request to separate progression costs from pay rise calculation has been rejected.

3.4 Louise Wilson explained that the review of HR policies is ongoing. Feedback from focus group discussions concerning grievance and appeals will be published on the Scottish Government intranet, the Saltire.

3.5 e-HR was discussed. The electronic system was launched to core Scottish Government (SG) at the end of March 2008. There are some issues arising from the different hierarchies of the SG staff directory and e-HR line management hierarchies that require resolution. Further testing is underway before the rectified version will be rolled out.

3.6 Questions were asked about the implementation of e-HR for NAS. Dave Brownlee explained that a meeting will be held between NAS, e-HR project manager and the Shared Services Centre to decide upon the extent to which NAS adopts e-HR. NAS already operates successful in-house online systems for a number of business systems including annual leave and sickness absence.

3.7 No update was available about the SG People Strategy. George Mackenzie anticipates that all SG strategies will be related to the Scottish Government Purpose. The Scotland Performs website will launch on 27 May 2008 and concerns performance indicators for Scotland.

3.8 HR feedback has been collected by an online questionnaire. Fluctuations were outlined but overall results are considered to be steady. The issue attracting the highest number of contacts has consistently been found to be recruitment. Other issues, such as early retirement have varied in popularity dependent upon current events within SG. The information gathered by HR survey will be used to monitor trends.

3.9 Dave Brownlee reported that NAS made an equivalent early retirement offer to employees, in response to the original notice about this which specifically excluded staff in Agencies. This was in the interest of fairness. Two members of staff had their applications for flexible early retirement accepted and two accepted offers of early severance. It was noted that as a result the Keeper's secretary post is currently vacant and subject to a recruitment process.

3.10 It was noted that HR require performance appraisal forms to be submitted electronically. As NAS is not on SCOTS this means they are technically being e-mailed over insecure connection. It was agreed that in practice this method is secure and there are measures in place to detect security breaches.

3.11 Dave Brownlee explained that quarterly reports on attendance management are being supplied by HR and have proved useful in monitoring sickness absence. George Mackenzie added that an annual improvement in sickness absence statistics is apparent.

3.12 One problem had been experienced whereby an individual on long term sickness absence was dismissed with compensation but their line manager was not informed by HR.

4. Finance

4.1 Monitoring Report

4.1.1 Jim Grady gave a verbal monitoring report and explained that a finalised document would be circulated to attendees following the meeting. A completed monitoring report will be available by 30 May 2008.

4.1.2 It is expected that NAS will have kept within budgetary provision for year 2007-2008 and that the underspend will not be large. Analysis by category of expenditure will be included in the written monitoring report which will also plot changes between Autumn and Spring budget revisions.

4.1.3 NAS had surrendered £500,000 in both operating and capital costs to SG due to delays in building work which prevented payment to contractors before year end. A case for recovering this resource during 2008-2009 will be made. Maureen McGeown explained the expediency of making the claim as soon as possible.

4.1.5 Maureen McGeown explained that SG Finance will begin an intensive exercise to identify savings and will assist NAS in making the case for recovery of surrendered funding. Malcolm Pentland, Business Manager for Europe, External Affairs and Culture Directorate will also be notified.

4.1.6 Dave Brownlee noted that difficult decisions about the internal division of resources between NAS branches and objectives must be made.

4.17 The sum of £75,000 to be transferred to NAS for the Register of Tartans development work will be effected at Autumn Budget Revision.

Action: Jim Grady to issue monitoring report.

4.2 Accounts

A timetable for the production of NAS accounts 2007-2008 has been agreed with auditors. External Auditors Grant Thornton will begin work towards finalising accounts in August 2008 and completion is expected late autumn 2008.

5. Corporate Plan 2007-2008 progress reports

5.1 Records Services Division (January-March)

5.1.1 Peter Anderson provided a summary of Records Service Division progress reports which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Government Records Branch key business objective to review NAS selection policy on government records was partially achieved. A proposal document was produced and approved by the Scottish Records Advisory Council but the planned study involving Scottish Government paper records requires confirmation by the selected SG business area before it may be carried out. Changes in the SG Information Management Unit's processing of paper files were noted. The Managing Our Digital Records Project has been delayed. ICT input is required and other ICTB objectives took precedence. The current project manager is now expected to take up another post in NAS before the project's completion.

5.1.2 Frank Manson noted that work towards the Digital Data Archive (DDA) has impacted upon the achievement of objectives across the office and this is recognised as a pivotal project. Options for carrying forward the second phase of the digital archiving project (DDA2) were discussed. A scoping study with dedicated staff will be established and designation of specific resources is crucial to its success. It is considered that the existing DDA Project Board will form the DDA2 Project Board.

Action: DDA2 Project Board to be established.

5.1.3 Michael Moss expressed the view that private electronic records present a challenge for digital archiving. NAS will focus upon the digital preservation of records subject to statutory obligations. The first records to be ingested will be electronic sasines.

5.1.4 One outcome of the DDA2 scoping study will be a presentation to SG Strategic Board. It is intended to emphasise that the continuing archival preservation of Scottish Government records in the era of electronic records is very important for government and that the DDA is not an internal project that only concerns NAS. Frank Manson commented that this approach should be extended to all NAS stakeholders. Michael Moss noted the usefulness of the SG Records Manager as an advocate for these issues.

5.1.5 Court and Legal Records Branch progress with the DDA was discussed. Work to correct database entries proceeded and will be continued into 2008-2009. The Lord President's expert group on records was established with much NAS input. Work towards the SQL server version of the Solemn database must be deferred due to other priorities, including the DDA.

5.1.6 Private Records Branch progress was discussed. The development of educational resources based on the Dalhousie collection was not achieved as other projects took precedence. Consideration of other private collections which may be put up for sale by their owners took place. It was reported that cataloguing backlogs have been identified and prioritised and the importance of this approach was recognised. The retransmission of records under Charge and Superintendence and various conditions attached to different deposits were discussed. Frank Manson emphasised the necessity of identifying conditions and status of all deposits.

5.1.7 Launch of the replacement NAS online catalogue on 1 April 2008 was discussed. Initial problems have been resolved. Michael Moss confirmed from his personal experience the satisfactory operation of the OPAC for researchers.

5.1.8 Educational activities were reviewed including the uptake of Scottish Archives for Schools resources by teachers. The compulsory teaching of Scottish History is considered opportune. Video-conferencing was discussed. This is seen as a key tool for increasing access to the nation's records. George Mackenzie explained aims to deliver a launch event involving remote schools, Scottish Ministers and potentially local archives. Video-conferencing could also be used in conjunction with Scottish Universities for the benefit of post-graduates who are unfamiliar with archival research. It was suggested that some content of the Post-graduate Training Visit to Edinburgh Repositories (PTVER) could be delivered remotely using these facilities.

5.1.9 The commercial picture library, ScotlandsImages, was launched during a trade fair at the beginning of May 2008. As well as generating income this will increase the number and variety of publications that feature NAS document images.

5.2 Corporate Services Division (January-March)

5.2.1 Dave Brownlee presented key points from Corporate Services Division progress reports. The ScotlandsPeople infrastructure is in place as planned. There are delays in application software development which is being undertaken by GROS staff. The NAS IT Manager has taken over project management of this outstanding work in order to guarantee timely completion. The ScottishDocuments website was redesigned for hosting digitised church records. Testing will be completed by June 2008 in readiness for the site's launch. This site will be used to pilot additional digital research resources and to enable digital consultation by local authorities. The digital imaging projects concerning valuation rolls and Catholic registers are underway. The first batch of index data has been returned for quality assurance. Michael Moss described the necessity of presenting ward maps as part of the valuation rolls project. The potential for using GIS systems has also been considered.

5.2.2 It was reported that Finance and Administration Branch will establish financial procedures for the ScotlandsPeople Centre. The issue of VAT charging in relation to ScotlandsPeople online sales remains under investigation.

5.2.3 Conservation Services Branch (CSB) progress report was discussed. It was explained that in addition to the objectives reported against, a lot of CSB work is in support of the digitisation programme. Supervision of the safe transportation of records for imaging by contractors has also been undertaken. The box making service has grown with increased demand for boxes from internal NAS customers and external organisations placing commercial orders.

5.2.4 Accommodation Services Branch objectives were considered. The building work for the ScotlandsPeople Centre will be completed by June 2008 and contractors are dealing with snagging. The garden to the rear of GRH is nearing completion.

5.2.5 It was noted that long term accommodation planning is dependent upon various Ministerial decisions and work on the NAS business case has reached hiatus as a result. There was some discussion of a development in Belfast comparable to the Granton plan and incorporating the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). The preferred outcome of extending upon the TTH site was reiterated. Frank Manson suggested that NAS Non Executive Directors could write to Scottish Ministers in support of timely decision making on accommodation issues that affect the future operation of NAS.

5.2.6 George Mackenzie circulated the Senior Management Branch progress report and noted issues including the NAS branding refresh, developing events hosting and improving sickness absence.

5.2.7 Michael Moss suggested that liaison with the Scottish Council on Archives would form an important part of Senior Management activities during 2008-2009. He recognised a discrepancy between the archive sector's perceptions about the Keeper of the Records of Scotland's role and the Keeper's statutory powers. George Mackenzie noted that Parliamentary Questions following the abolition of the Scottish Records Advisory Council

made it clear that Scottish Ministers expect the Keeper to co-ordinate advice from the archives sector including the Scottish Council on Archives. It was noted that the SCA will not be able to disburse grants to the archive sector and is not a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB).

6. Corporate Plan 2008-2009

6.1 Copies of the latest draft of the Corporate Plan 2008-2009 were circulated. Sections that require further editing were discussed including; Mission and Functions; Scottish Government Strategic Objectives and NAS Strategic View.

6.2 George Mackenzie reported that the consultants contracted to refresh the NAS brand had also suggested revised mission statements as part of the exercise. These suggestions matched feedback from NAS workshops involving staff which emphasised accessibility, modernity and variety of functions carried out. Michael Moss noted that the mission statement should also be aligned with the Scottish Government's Scotland Performs agenda. George Mackenzie reiterated this point and added that the NAS mission statement must also reflect the 5 Scottish Government Strategic Priorities.

6.3 Section 7 of the Corporate Plan refers to the Scottish Government Priorities and the Scottish Government's Purpose requires inclusion. A clear match is apparent between the corporate objective to increase the use of the nation's records and the Scottish Government's aim to achieve sustainable growth in the nation's economy. It was noted that NAS activities directly contribute to this objective as well as indirectly through promotion of Scottish identity.

6.4 Michael Moss asserted the possibility of adding transparency, accountability and efficient government to the Strategic View section of the Corporate Plan.

6.5 It was recognised that the Key Performance Indicators require further consideration. Frank Manson reiterated the idea that some measure of "customer satisfaction" be included and explained the value of evaluating the experience of customers where possible. It was explained that Reader Services Branch intend to conduct a survey of on-site visitors during 2008-2009. Frank Manson suggested use of online surveys which remote researchers may be invited to complete. Online ScotlandsPeople customers may be incentivised to complete surveys by offering free credits. It was reported that NAS takes part in the national Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) survey of archive users and that response rates have been high. George Mackenzie expects that customer survey evidence will contribute to the balanced management of onsite and online public services.

6.6 Non Executive Directors were invited to consider the Corporate Plan draft and to communicate further suggestions subsequent to the meeting.

7. Audit Issues

It was agreed that a standing agenda item is the appropriate mechanism for raising audit issues with the Management Board. As chair of the NAS audit committee, Frank Manson asserted that there were no competent issues to present at this time. It was noted that a third Non Executive member of the Audit Committee will be sought in due course.

8. Electronic Records and Digital Policy

8.1 Working groups have been convened to investigate electronic records and digital policy. A discussion based on their findings is scheduled to take place at the Branch Heads meeting on 27 May 2008. It was agreed that this topic remain on the Management Board agenda.

8.2 Senior management explained that the digitisation programme will be extended beyond the funded projects currently underway and that mechanisms to finance continued digital resource creation must be identified. Frank Manson noted the mutual benefits in continued partnership with Registers of Scotland (ROS) to resource digitisation programmes. Integration of ScotlandsPeople with the proposed ScotlandsPlaces project would benefit from the GIS resources available at ROS. Michael Moss suggested that digitisation policy should be aligned across all 5 National Collections. George Mackenzie reported that there is Scottish Government agreement that standards for digital capture be standardised across the National Collections. The National Library of Scotland would be a key participant in this exercise. Agreed approaches to procurement would also avoid duplication of efforts.

8.3 Michael Moss anticipated that the Scottish Council on Archives may investigate alignment of digital policy across local authority archives.

8.4 GIS is considered to be a resource suitable for partnership sharing. It was noted that GROS, ROS and RCAHMS utilise GIS. A Scottish Government initiative to reconcile all GIS in use across government continues and is a large scale exercise.

9. Risk Register

Dave Brownlee explained that following finalisation of the Corporate Plan, Branch Heads are invited to review branch risk registers. These revisions inform changes to be made to the corporate risk register. Michael Moss suggested some presentational changes to the risk register.

10. Any other business

10.1 A formal opening of the ScotlandsPeople Centre is scheduled to take place on 4th July 2008. It was agreed that the official visit concerns refurbishment of the buildings as well as preparations for the ScotlandsPeople Centre facility. Presentational considerations and invitees were discussed. Homecoming 2009 will also present opportunities for ScotlandsPeople publicity events.

11. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting take place on 14 August 2008. Jenny Cutts will provide confirmation. [This meeting has subsequently been arranged for 2 September 2008.]

Jenny Cutts
22 May 2008